

Isaiah Chapter 33, Hebrew Text with Translation and Footnotes
A Beautiful Confession of Faith in YHWH (Verses 5-6)
Who Fills Zion with Justice and Righteousness
in Whose Light Assurance Comes of Victory Over Enemies,
and Ultimate Salvation in His Zion,
Despite Present Times of Trouble¹

¹Motyer entitles **33:1-35:10** “Victory, proclamation and pilgrimage.”

He comments that “The main thrust of the third ‘woe’ was transformation, both of the world and of ‘Jacob.’ Both these lines are now developed in typical **Old Testament** terms, which means that the emphasis is on the transformation of Zion, which in turn becomes a universal message.” (P. 262)

Slotki entitles **chapter 33** “The Deliverance of Zion.”

Alexander states that “This chapter contains a general threatening of retribution to the enemies of God’s people, with particular reference to Sennacherib or the Assyrian power. The spoiler shall himself be spoiled in due time, through the Divine interposition, and for the exaltation of Jehovah (**verses 1-6**). The state of desolation and alarm is followed by sudden deliverance (**verses 7-13**). The same vicissitudes are again described, but in another form (**verses 14-19**). The peace and security of Zion are set forth under the figures of a stationary tent, and of a spot surrounded by broad rivers, yet impassable to hostile vessels (**verses 20-22**). By a beautiful transition, the enemy is described as such a vessel, but dismantled and abandoned to its enemies (**verse 23**). The chapter closes with a general promise of deliverance from suffering, as a consequence of pardoned sin (**verse 24**).” (P. 6)

Oswalt entitles **chapter 33** “The King redeems Zion.”

He comments that “**Chapter 33** continues from **chapter 32** the contrast to the outlook of **chapters 28-31**. Dependence upon Egypt for relief from Assyria (which dependence must end in disaster) is replaced by reliance upon the Lord, with correspondingly different results. G. A. Smith finds the most logical historical context for this chapter as being between the time when the tribute was paid to Sennacherib (**2 Kings 18:13-16**) and when the final attack upon Jerusalem was begun. The leaders of Judah have tried every other avenue to extricate themselves from Assyria’s grip. But each has been fruitless. Egypt has been defeated; Sennacherib has refused to be bought off; he has taken the tribute, but still remains, preparing for battle. In this moment, Smith suggests, Hezekiah leads his people to repentance and Isaiah gives God’s response, which is recorded here. This explanation is very attractive and may be correct. However, the text does not make the historical setting explicit. It is thus the logical connection which is most important here. That setting is in contrast with the former way of thinking.

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But Oswalt notes that “Today commentators generally reject either a historical or a logical connection with **chapters 28-32**. The tendency has become to treat it with **chapters 34** and **35** as an apocalyptic conclusion to the revised edition of Isaiah’s speeches in **chapters 1-32**.

“A good deal of language similar to that of the **Psalms** appears here...More recent writers [see] **verses 1-6** as separate from **verses 7-24**. Delitzsch had already taken a similar position in the last century when he described **verses 1-6** as an introduction to the rest of the chapter. This analysis seems to be accurate in that these verses summarize the content of what follows: God will arise, destroy the destroyer, and transform Zion.

“Within **verses 7-24**, there appear to be two subdivisions: **verses 7-16** and **verses 17-24**. The first can be seen as containing a lament (**verses 7-9**) and an oracle of response (**verses 10-16**). The second contains a description of the effects of God’s kingly rule. The picture is in direct contrast to that painted of Judah and Jerusalem in **chapters 28-31**.” (Pp. 590-91)

Watts entitles **chapter 33** “God’s Promise to Judge the Tyrant.”

He comments that “In this final scene, Isaiah’s vision approaches a major critical point as violence increases and God prepares to intervene. As the first episode [**33:1-6**] opens...immanent violence brings reactions from Yahweh’s counselors and from a chorus in Jerusalem. In [the second episode, **33:7-12**], the situation becomes worse. In [the third episode, **33:13-24**], Yahweh intervenes. Those near and far are challenged to assess the event and recognize what the results of God’s intervention will be.” (P. 418)

Kaiser entitles **chapter 33** “The Inauguration of the Kingdom.”

He comments that “[**Chapter 33**] speaks of a powerful enemy who has risen up against Jerusalem, and of the ultimate destruction of that enemy, to be followed by the glorification of Jerusalem...But even an experienced reader, well acquainted with the **Old Testament**, will find constant difficulties, and will wonder whether he has understood correctly what he has read, whether the received text is reliable and whether individual themes have been accurately interpreted.” (P. 339)

Motyer entitles **33:1-12** “Ultimate realities: salvation and wrath.”

He comments that these verses are “significantly rooted in the time of the Assyrian threat and thus anchored in contemporary history, but by **verse 12** the canvas is widening and thereafter the themes are eschatological [have you ever read this term ‘eschatological’ in the **Bible**? It means ‘having to do with end times’—and we think it is often misleading to use the term. The **Bible** nowhere speaks of ‘the end of time,’ or of

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‘the end of the world.’ While it oftentimes speaks of the destruction of evil, and evil kingdoms, biblical prophecy continually looks beyond the destruction, to the ‘good times coming,’ with the renewal of all the destruction!]. The basic motifs are provided by such **Psalms** as **46, 47, 48, 74** and **83**...This faith [taught by Isaiah] was given poetical and religious expression in the **Psalms** and the cult [meaning Israelite worship in the Jerusalem temple]...It was the faith of Isaiah preached during the Sennacherib crisis and which he now sees in its final eschatological manifestation...

Assyria is veiled behind the description ‘destroyer’ and ‘traitor’ (**verse 1**), and the climax is a fire of judgment upon ‘the peoples’ (**verses 3, 12**). There is, however, the same sense of an ‘eleventh hour’ Divine rescue, with the people of God just managing to live one day at a time (**verse 2**), despair taking hold within a wasted world (**verses 7-9**) and the dramatic threefold Divine ‘Now’ of **verse 10**.” (P. 262)

Watts entitles **verses 1-6** “Woe, You Destroyer!”

He comments that “**Verse 1** is a ‘woe’ speech directed against someone accustomed to doing violence who had not yet felt the pressure of reprisal. **Verse 2** is a plea for God’s mercy in this time of crisis. **Verses 3-4** address God, expecting His intervention. **Verses 5-6a** announce Yahweh’s exaltation on Zion. **Verse 6b-d** responds with a summary confession of faith in Yahweh.” (P. 420)

Motyer entitles **verses 1-6** “The salvation of Zion.”

Kaiser entitles **verse 1** “The violence and the fall of the tyrant.”

He comments that “This proclamation of woe places us in the final age of a history which has consisted of conflict between the nations and their hostility to Yahweh and His people, and also proclaims the end of the destroyer...[who] corresponds exactly to the figure of Gog from the land of Magog in **Ezekiel 38-39**...

“An unconquered enemy whom no nation of the earth has succeeded in outwitting will conclude his work of destruction by casting to the ground the entire known world of the nations in an uninterrupted series of victories, and will then fall himself. The mysterious paraphrase of what is to happen in the future indicates that these events will be monstrous and will go far beyond the normal measure of historical events.” (P. 342)

²Alexander translates **verse 1**: “*Woe to thee spoiling and thou wast not spoiled, deceiving and they did not deceive thee! When thou shalt cease to spoil thou shalt be spoiled, and when thou art done deceiving they shall deceive thee.*”

(continued...)

וּבּוֹגֵד וְלֹא-בִגְדוּ בּוֹ
 כְּהִתְמַדְּ שׂוֹדֵד תּוֹשֵׁד
 כִּנְלֹתְךָ לְבִגְד יִבְגְּדוּ-בְךָ:

Woe (to) one despoiling / devastating,³ and you were not despoiled / devastated;
 and acting faithlessly, and they did not act faithlessly against him!⁴

When you are finished despoiling / devastating, you will be despoiled / devastated!

When you have ceased⁵ to act faithlessly, they will act faithlessly against you!⁶

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He comments that “The two ideas meant to be expressed are those of violence and treachery, as the crying sins of arbitrary powers...In themselves, the words are applicable to any oppressive and deceitful enemy...This verse describes the enemy as acting without provocation, and also as having never yet experienced reverses.” (P. 7)

Oswalt comments that the destroyer...betrayers...most likely refer to Assyria... Here Isaiah declares, as in **10:12-19, 24-25; 14:24-27; 30:30-33**, and **31:8-9**, that that day is not far distant when destruction and treachery will come back upon Assyria with interest.” (P. 592). Yes, but the text does not make this explicit.

Motyer similarly states that “The background is Assyria’s apparent acceptance of Hezekiah’s attempt to buy himself out of trouble (**2 Kings 18:13-18**), yet the attack on Jerusalem was continued as if no agreement had been reached.” (P.263)

³Slotki comments that “The prophet apostrophizes [addresses an exclamatory statement to] Sennacherib who invaded the country in 701 B.C.E.” (P. 154)

However, Watts states that “The identity of the destroyer / traitor [our ‘one despoiling / devastating’] is not revealed. The context suggests a time when Assyrian power is waning and Egypt is maneuvering for a favorable position. The most likely identification is Assyria itself. The verse picks up the prediction of **Isaiah 10:12** in the words *when you finish destroying*.” (Pp. 420-21)

⁴Motyer observes that “The charge moves from physical destructiveness to moral unscrupulousness.” (P. 263)

⁵Where our Hebrew text has כִּנְלֹתְךָ, **kannelotheka**, literally “as the ceasing of yours,” 1QIs^a has ככללתך, **kekalotheka**, “as you cease.”

⁶Motyer states that “The punishment will be exactly what the crime merits (compare **Deuteronomy 19:18-19**). The Lord’s perfect management of human affairs

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guarantees that for every trickster there is a trickster to outdo him, until in the end all alike perish in their cleverness.” (P. 263)

We think this comment is dangerously close to the kind of “retribution-theology” advocated by Job’s friends, claiming that Job must have sinned in some way that merited the suffering he was undergoing—advocating something like this view that the Lord “perfectly manages human affairs.” The **Book of Job** explodes that theory, showing how the “law of the jungle” reigns in human history, just as it does in the animal kingdom, and YHWH does not come miraculously to rescue the lamb from the mouth of the lion, or to deliver Job from the terrible suffering he underwent.

What do you think?

⁷Kaiser entitles **verses 2-6** ‘Yahweh’s Help.’”

He comments that “The attention is naturally drawn from the future affliction to the God Who can and will help when it is taking place, to Yahweh, Who is addressed in words taken from **Psalms 123:3** (compare **Psalms 4:2; 6:3; 31:10**) and in Whom confidence is once again expressed in words reminiscent of the Psalms (compare **Psalms 25:21; 25:5; 33:22; 39:8** and **Isaiah 25:9; 26:8**)...”

“When the apocalyptic poet begs Him on behalf of the community to be their arm every morning, we quickly perceive that the early morning is the time when battle begins. We recall that the waves of the enemy are to dash morning after morning against Jerusalem (compare **Isaiah 28:19**) and that in the end Yahweh is to destroy the hostile enemy before daybreak in front of the gates of Jerusalem (compare **Isaiah 27:14; Psalm 46:6** and also **Isaiah 29:7ff.**)...”

“Since the people of Judah have no effective army of their own, they are entirely dependent upon the help of God, Who will place at their disposal His arm in battle. Thus at the very end of the **Old Testament** we find Yahweh once again as the Warrior Who fights for His people...”

“The poet speaks mysteriously of the flight of the nations before the thunderous noise...That Yahweh’s cry consists of His voice in the thunder can be concluded from the tradition (compare also **Isaiah 17:13; 29:6; 30:30**). If the poet is thinking in realistic terms of the rich spoil on which the people of Jerusalem could cast themselves like grasshoppers and locusts on meadowland, this would be quite in accordance with the feelings of a nation which had been under subjection for centuries and yet was still full of a living inner hope.” (Pp. 242-43)

Slotki comments that in **verse 2**, “Turning away from the invader towards heaven, the prophet offers a prayer and expresses his confidence in God’s power.” (P. 154)

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לֵךְ קִוִּינוּ
 הִיָּה זְרָעַם לְבִקְרִים
 אֶף־יִשׁוּעַתֵּנוּ בְּעַת צָרָה:

O YHWH, show favor to us!⁸

For You we waited.⁹

⁷(...continued)

Motyer likewise comments that “Instead of a prosaic statement that in such a time of crisis the believing church resorts to prayer...Isaiah inserts a telling cameo [short, descriptive sketch] of prayer taking place.” (P. 263)

We see no “cameo of prayer taking place”—but simply the words of the prayer.

Alexander translates **verse 2**: “*Jehovah, favor us; for Thee we wait; be their arm in the mornings, also our salvation in time of trouble.*”

He comments that “Instead of *their arm*, Lowth follows several of the ancient versions in reading *our arm*...The truth seems to be, as Barnes well says, that Isaiah here interposes his own feelings, and offers his own prayer that God would be the strength of the nation, and then, with an immediate change of form, presents the prayer of the people...[The statement concerning *in the mornings*] is an indefinite expression, understood by some to mean *early or quickly*, by others *every morning*.” (P. 7)

⁸For this plea, חֲנַנֵּנוּ יְהוָה, “show us favor, O YHWH,” see **Psalm 123:3**,

חֲנַנֵּנוּ יְהוָה חֲנַנֵּנוּ
 כִּי־רַב שָׁבַעְנוּ בּוֹז:

Show us favor, O YHWH, show us favor!
 because we were filled with much contempt!

Although this is the only place in the **Book of Psalms** where this exact same plea occurs, see the following passages where an imperative form of the verb חָנַן, **chanan** occurs: **Psalms 4:2; 6:3; 9:14^{Heb} / 13^{Eng}; 25:16; 26:11; 27:7; 30:11; 31:10; 41:5, 11; 51:3; 56:2; 57:2; 86:3, 16; 119:29, 58, 132.**

⁹Oswalt translates in the present tense, “For You we wait,” and comments that this “expresses a dramatic turnabout from the attitudes expressed in **chapters 29-30.**” (P. 592)

Be their arm¹⁰ for the mornings,¹¹

¹⁰Slotki states that by “their arm” Isaiah means “Israel’s help and defense. The abrupt change of person from the first to the third is not unusual in Hebrew style. Another explanation is ‘an arm against them.’” (P. 154)

Watts notes that the Syriac, the Aramaic Targum, and the Latin Vulgate all have the first person pronominal suffix, “our arm,” which “fits the context.” (P. 419)

¹¹Slotki’s translation has “every morning.” He comments that this means “Always, continually.” (P. 154)

Oswalt states that “Be our strength (literally ‘arm’) in the morning refers to the mighty man who at the time of attack, typically the morning, bares his arm in the defense of his people.” (P. 593) Compare:

Isaiah 51:9,

Raise up! Raise up! / Awake! Awake!
Dress (yourself with) strength, arm of YHWH!
Awake as (in) days of old / ancient time,
(in) generations of long-lasting (past) times!
Are You not She,
the One cutting Rahab in pieces,
piercing a Dragon?

Isaiah 52:10,

YHWH made bare His set-apart arm,
to / in (the) eyes of all the nations;
and all ends of (the) earth will see
our God’s salvation / deliverance!

Isaiah 53:1,

Who put confidence in / believed, our report?
And YHWH’s arm, to whom was it revealed?

Isaiah 63:5,

And I looked, and there was no one helping;
and I was appalled, and there was no one supporting.
And My arm saved / delivered for Me,
and My rage, it supported Me.

surely our salvation / deliverance in a time of distress!¹²

33:3¹³ מִקּוֹל הַמְּזוֹן נִדְרְוּ עַמִּים

מֵרוֹמְמֹתֶיךָ נִפְצְוּ גוֹיִם:

Because of (the) voice of a crowd / tumult,¹⁴ peoples¹⁵ fled;
because of Your rising,¹⁶ nations were scattered.¹⁷

¹²Oswalt states that “the point is being made that whenever people will recognize God’s Kingship and turn to Him in faith, restoration and reconstruction will follow.” (P. 593)

¹³Alexander translates / comments on **verse 3**: “At a noise of tumult (or tumultuous noise) the peoples flee; at thy rising the nations are scattered...Aben Ezra and Lowth suppose these words to be addressed to Sennacherib [but] all other writers to Jehovah Himself. Jerome refers the first cluse to the voice of the destroying angel, Piscator to the tumult in the camp of the Assyrians...

“The *rising* meant is not the ascent of the judge to the judgment-seat...nor the exaltation of the Assyrian to power...but the act of rising from a state of seeming inaction, or as when one rouses himself to strike...These words are commonly applied to the Divine interposition in the case of Sennacherib’s attack on Jerusalem; but Ewald understands them more generally as denoting that such had ever been the effect of Jehovah’s presence, and must be so still.” (P. 7)

¹⁴Slotki holds that this means “God’s thunder and storm.” (P. 154)

Motyer states that “*The thunder of Your voice* / ‘the sound of tumult / multitude’ may be a reference to the rumored Egyptian advance in **2 Kings 19:9**.” (P. 263)

¹⁵Slotki’s translation has “the peoples,” and he comments that this is referring to “the Assyrian hosts, composed of many nationalities. Since the text has no definite article, it may be a general description of God’s invincible might and the translation should be ‘peoples...nations.’” (P. 154)

¹⁶Where our Hebrew text has מֵרוֹמְמֹתֶיךָ, **meromemutheka**, “from Your rising,” 1QIs^a has מֵדַמְמַתְךָ, “from your silencing,” and we note that it is very easy for a copyist to mistake the letters ׀, *resh* and ׀, *daleth*—which is what has happened here. Rahlfs, the Greek translation, has ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου σου, “from the fear of You / Yours,” which is different from either the Masoretic Text or 1QIs^a.

¹⁷Oswalt comments that “The point is clear: why trust the nations in place of God, when it will take only a simple manifestation of His power to scatter them like chaff.” (P.

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33:4¹⁸ וְאַסְף־שְׁלַלְכֶם אֶסְף־הַחֲסִיל

כְּמִשַּׁק גְּבִים שׁוֹקֵק בּוֹ:

And your (plural) spoil¹⁹ is gathered—a gathering of the locust;
like leaping²⁰ of locusts, leaping²¹ upon it.²²

¹⁷(...continued)

593)

Motyer says, “However great the threat in human eyes, all that is needed is for the Lord to stand up!...The uprising of the Lord may astonish His enemies and fill His people with fresh excitement, but in itself it is nothing remarkable: it expresses what has always been true.” (Pp. 263-64)

¹⁸Slotki states that in **verse 4** “The prophet addresses the Assyrians.” (P. 155)

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 4**: “And your spoil shall be gathered (like) the gathering of the devourer; like the running of locusts running on it. By another apostrophe [direct address to the one involved], the prophet here addresses the enemy collectively.” (P. 7)

Oswalt comments that “When God has driven off the nations, their spoil will be left behind, where it will be stripped as locusts strip a grainfield (compare **2 Kings 7:3-16** for such an event).” (Pp. 593-94)

¹⁹Watts notes (very helpfully) that the Hebrew שְׁלַלְכֶם, **shelalekhem**, “your (plural) spoil,” is ambiguous. “Does it mean ‘the spoil you gather,’ or ‘the spoil gathered from you’?” (P. 420)

²⁰Watts notes that the phrase כְּמִשַּׁק, **kemashshaq** [our ‘like leaping’] is found nowhere else in the **Hebrew Bible**, making its meaning difficult to determine. He translates by “like a leap.” He suggests that it may be “a hiphil participle from נִשַּׁק , **nashaq** meaning ‘attack.’” (P. 420) Perhaps...but this may be guess-work on his part.

Rahlf’s Greek translation is συναγάγη, **synagage**, “a gathering.”

²¹Alexander comments that “The verb שָׁקַק, **shaqaq** denotes specifically the act of *running eagerly*, or with a view to satisfy the appetite.” (P. 8)

²²Slotki comments that “as the caterpillar gathereth” means “leaving nothing behind.” He adds that “The word for caterpillar signifies ‘the consumer,’ and probably denotes the locust in the larva or pupa state, and not any particular species.” (P. 155)

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33:5²³ נִשְׁגַּב יְהוָה

כִּי שָׁכַן מְרוֹם

מִלְא צִיּוֹן מִשְׁפָּט וְצֶדֶקָה:

²²(...continued)

He is quoting Henry Baker Tristram , 1822-1906, an English clergyman, **Bible** scholar, traveler and ornithologist. As a parson-naturalist he was an early supporter of Darwinism, attempting to reconcile evolution and creation. Among his works were **The Land of Israel, a Journal of Travels in Palestine, Undertaken with Special Reference to Its Physical Character** (1865), and **The Natural History of the Bible** (1867).

Alexander states that “The older writers understand this clause to mean as *locusts are gathered*, for the purpose of destroying them...But all the modern writers [in the mid-19th century] understand the words to mean as *locusts gather*, i.e. *greedily* and thoroughly, not leaving a tree or a field till they have stripped it.” (Pp. 7-8)

Slotki adds that the “leaping” is that of those “who gather the Assyrian spoil.”

Motyer comments that “The battle is over (*plunder* is being taken) as soon as it started...*Men pounced* is the enthusiastic entering upon the fruits of the Lord’s victory.” (P. 263)

Watts notes concerning the last part of **verse 4** that “the exact meanings of these words [with reference to locusts] remain obscure. But the best suggestion is that they are different stages of locust development. Compare **Joel 2:1-11** for the figure of locusts for a military invasion.” (P. 420)

²³Slotki comments on **verses 5-6** that they express “Gratitude and adoration at the prospect of the blessings to come, and the security and high social and religious state which will prevail in Israel.” (P. 155)

Oswalt states that **verses 5-6** close the summarizing introduction (verses 1-6) on the note of God’s exaltation.” (P. 594)

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 5**: “*Exalted is Jehovah because dwelling on high (or inhabiting a high place); He fills (or has filled) Zion with judgment and righteousness.*” (P. 8)

YHWH was exalted,²⁴

because He dwells (in the) height.²⁵

He filled Zion (with) justice and righteousness / right-relationship.²⁶

²⁴The Hebrew verb **נִשְׁגַּב**, **nisgabh**, is the niph'al participle from the root **שָׁגַב** which means “to be inaccessibly high,” “set on high,” “exalted.” Compare **Isaiah 2:11** and **Isaiah 2:17**. It is commonly used for inaccessibly high fortifications. Far higher than any earthly fortification is YHWH, the Creator of the multiverse!

²⁵Whereas ancient readers of the **Bible** took a statement like this to mean God dwells in “heaven,” an invisible location far above the clouds, today with our advantage of the Hubble telescope, we think more in terms of “above all the universes,” beyond the stars, or “at the center of the original ‘black hole.’”

The Hebrew word translated “dwells” is **שָׁכַן**, **shokhen**, a qal masculine participle, “dwells,” “settles down,” “abides.” Related words are the following:

שֵׁכֶן, **shekhen**, “dwelling”;

שָׁכֵן, **shakhen**, “inhabitant,” “neighbor”;

מִשְׁכָּן, **mishkan**, “dwelling-place,” “tabernacle” (the moveable center of worship in Israel’s wanderings through the wilderness.”

שֵׁכַנְיָהוּ, **shekhanyahu**, an Israelite personal name.

In Jewish and Christian theology, the phrase “Shekinah Glory” is oftentimes used with reference to the glory of the Divine presence, conventionally represented as light or interpreted symbolically (in Kabbalism as a divine feminine aspect). However the phrase is not found in the **Hebrew Bible**.

²⁶While we are filled with mystery when we seek to understand what YHWH’s dwelling ‘in the height’ may mean, there can be no doubt as to this affirmation. Wherever people truly acknowledge YHWH as their God, the Creator, the Savior / Deliverer, the fruits of that relationship is justice and righteousness!

Yes—to know YHWH is to know the Source of genuine ethics / morality / justice! What do you get when you get YHWH? You get the Ten Commandments—the highest, most concise statement of an ethical / moral code known to ancient humanity. You get justice and righteousness!

Kaiser comments that “By an allusion to **Isaiah 1:21** the poet assure us that this God, Who stands above all earthly intrigues, will once again make Jerusalem the dwelling place of justice and righteousness and therefore of all-embracing salvation...

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33:6²⁷ וְהָיָה אֱמוּנַת עֲתִידָךְ

חֶסֶן יְשׁוּעָתָךְ

חִכְמַת וְדַעַתָּךְ

יִרְאַת יְהוָה

הֵיא אוֹצְרוֹ:

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“In this way the apocalyptic poet gives an assurance that God will not only annihilate the destroyer in the end but will also henceforth grant His people a blessed future sustained by their fear of God. The dramatic expectation of spoil is surpassed by that of a life in righteousness and the fear of Yahweh in the new Jerusalem.” (P. 344)

²⁷Translations of **verse 6** vary greatly:

King James, “And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, *and* strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD *is* his treasure.”

Tanakh, “Faithfulness to Your charge was *her* wealth, Wisdom and devotion *her* triumph, Reverence for the LORD -- that was her treasure.” By “her” is meant Zion’s.

New Revised Standard, “he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is Zion’s treasure.”

New International, “He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure.”

New Jerusalem, “You can count on this all your days: wisdom and knowledge are the riches that save, the fear of Yahweh is his treasure.”

Rahlf’s, ἐν νόμῳ παραδοθήσονται ἐν θησαυροῖς ἡ σωτηρία ἡμῶν ἐκεῖ σοφία καὶ ἐπιστήμη καὶ εὐσέβεια πρὸς τὸν κύριον οὗτοί εἰσιν θησαυροὶ δικαιοσύνης, “In / by law they will be handed over. The salvation / deliverance of ours (is) in treasure-houses; there (are) wisdom and knowledge and godliness towards the Lord. These are treasures of righteousness.”

Alexander, “And He shall be the security of thy times, strength of salvations, wisdom and knowledge, the fear of Jehovah, that is His treasure.”

And He will be²⁸ (the) stability²⁹ of your (singular)³⁰ times,³¹

²⁸Watts translated by “and He is,” but we think this is mistaken. The verb is qal perfect / past tense, with waw-conversive / consecutive, making it a future verb, “and He will be...”

²⁹This is the Hebrew word אֱמוּנָה, **emunah**, “firmness, steadfastness, fidelity” (**Brown-Driver-Briggs**); **Holladay** has “steadiness, reliability, honesty, duty.”

See the article on this word by Alfred Jepsen in **Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament**, volume I, pp. 292-323, especially pp. 316-20. He would suggest the meanings “conscientiousness” (p. 317). He states that “The instances in which the meaning is certain...would suggest **emunah** conveys the idea of inner stability, integrity, conscientiousness, soberness” (p. 317). “**Emunah** is a type of behavior that may be defined as ‘genuineness, reliability, conscientiousness.’” (P. 318) “Kraus’s explanation of **emunah**...is...’The constant, irrevocable stability in which Yahweh remains Who He is.” (P. 319) “**Emunah** is used of God’s conduct, which corresponds to the nature of His Deity.” (P. 320)

We say, YHWH / God is True-Faithfulness that gives us a basis for loving and serving Him at every time in our lives, obeying His word, trusting Him for our future. When your life become centered on YHWH, your life is made stable—you will learn to practice “true faithfulness” in all your relationships. So many lives spin out of control, becoming addicted to harmful substances and practices that end up making our lives truly “a mess.” Not so when we fall in love with YHWH! We become stable people, whose words and actions can be depended on, at all times, in all situations.

What about your life? Has “true-faithfulness” become the hall-mark of your character?

³⁰Who does the singular “your” refer to? Alexander states that “the object of address is supposed by some to be Hezekiah, by others the Messiah, but is most probably the people or the believer as an individual.” (P. 8) We agree.

Watts translates by “her times”—but we think this is mistaken.

³¹The phrase אֵתְּיָכָא, (**itteyka**, “your times,” occurs only here in the **Hebrew Bible**. See the article on אֵת, (**eth**, “time,” in **Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament**, volume XI by T. Kronholm, from which we quote:

“The constant recurrence of the seasons and their associated times in the cycle of nature are due to the hand of the Creator—for example, the time of the turn of the year...of heavy rain...and spring rain...the time when migratory birds arrive...when the flocks are in heat...when goats give birth...when grain and wine abound...Among other things, the recurrent theme of Yahweh’s sovereign authority over the life-giving rain ‘in

(continued...)

³¹(...continued)

its season' in promises of blessing underlines dependence on Yahweh...Israel's hymns extol Yahweh for giving all His earthly creatures their food 'in due season'...The times of the year and of the day are appointed by God; they can be understood and managed only through insight into (God's) wisdom.

"But this brings us already into the realm of the various times associated with human life...the time of birth...of love...of delivery...of menstruation...of aging...and of death...This is probably also implicit in the use of the phrase [literally, 'in not time'] for premature death...These times delimit human life, but behind them stands Yahweh. This implies that human beings encounter God at work in the determined and determining times of their own lives...

"Something similar also holds true for the times established by human beings in response to those [times] inherent in nature, for example, mealtime, the time when the animals are gathered each day...or women go out of the city to draw water...the time of the grain harvest...threshing...or pruning grapes...in short, the right times for the various activities of human life...What is theologically significant is that these times of human activity, and thus the fate of all human beings, are in the hand of God...

"Naturally this includes the notion of the right time for people to act...and for the events that befall them...These events are either times of God's favor...and presence...or times of misfortune [and] distress...or evil...Such times are Divine punishment...wrath ...and vengeance...

"A consistent view of time from the theological perspective of creation, based on the term **תָּו**, (**eth** ['time']) is found in the **Old Testament** only in the **Book of Qohelet [Ecclesiastes]**. Although Qohelet's [the author of **Ecclesiastes**' name, a feminine participle, which implies a female author] intellectual world may include many elements reflective of Egyptian, Babylonian, and Greek wisdom, his [or her] overall conception is best understood on the basis of Israelite wisdom thought.

"In fundamental agreement with the thought of ancient Israel, Qohelet frequently emphasizes that 'everything happens at its proper time, which God determines' [quoting Loretz]...[here Kronholm introduce **Ecclesiastes 3**, with its unique treatment of 'time':

- 3:1 For the whole / everything--a time,
and a time, for every pleasure under the heavens.
- 3:2 A time for giving birth, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to root up what has been planted;
- 3:3 a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break through, and a time to build;
- 3:4 a time to cry, and a time to rejoice;
a time to lament, and a time to dance;

(continued...)

³¹(...continued)

- 3:5 a time to throw away stones, and a time to collect stones;
a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embracing;
3:6 a time to seek, and a time to destroy;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
3:7 a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silent, and a time to speak.
3:8 a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time of war, and a time of peace. [Darnell's translation]]

“Qohelet also emphasizes that God, Who is always at work in creation, ‘made everything suitable for its time’ (3:11). This statement...represents profound analysis of continuous Divine activity. In other contexts, too, Qohelet states that ‘every matter has (its) time and judgment’ (8:6)...The wise mind ‘knows the time and judgment (8:5)...

“The new element in Qohelet’s thought, critical of the earlier wisdom tradition—although he [she] does recognize in part the validity of that tradition—is that the mysteries of God’s appointed times are impenetrable not only to the swift, the strong, the intelligent, and the skillful, but also to the wise. Compare 3:11: ‘Bread is not to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to the skillful; but time and chance happen to them all...for humans do not know...their times.’ The context prohibits the common interpretation that this refers exclusively to the hour of death; this ignorance is all-embracing, and can be compared, for example, to what Qohelet says about the meaningless suffering of the righteous. Zimmerli has therefore rightly stressed that Qohelet achieved insights incomparably more radical than the rest of Israelite wisdom: ‘No one can control the moment of his birth or of his death; in like fashion, recognition and therefore also mastery of the particular moment are totally outside the realm of human possibility.’ (Pp. 447-49)

It is in this biblical context that Isaiah states that “Yahweh will be the stability of your times.” Knowing, serving, and trusting YHWH ties all of our times together, giving us purpose, duty, meaning and hope in all we do! Thus Qoheleth ends her book with the solemn affirmation,

- 12:13 End of a matter;
the whole was heard.
Revere / fear the God,
and observe His commandments!
For this—all of the human!
12:14 Because every work the God will bring into judgment,
concerning everything hidden,
whether good, and evil. (Darnell's translation)

treasure / wealth³² of deliverances / salvations,³³

³²The Hebrew word is **יָצִיט**, **chosen**, which occurs in only four other passages in the **Hebrew Bible**:

Proverbs 15:6,

House of a righteous person—great treasure;
and with wicked income / revenue—it was troubled / stirred up.

Proverbs 27:24,

Because treasure / wealth (**יָצִיט**) is not for long-lasting time;
and if a crown—to generation and the generation.

Jeremiah 20:5,

And I will give all this city's treasure / wealth (**יָצִיט**)
and all its toil / produce, and all its precious / costly things,
and all Judah's kings' treasuries / storehouses—
I will give into (the) hand of their enemies.

And they will plunder them, and they will take them,
and they will bring them into Babylon!

Ezekiel 22:25,

A conspiracy of her prophets (is) in her midst—
like the lion roaring, tearing prey they devoured a life!
They take treasure / wealth (**יָצִיט**) and precious possessions;
they multiplied her widows in her midst!

From these occurrences, we think the meaning here in **Isaiah 33:6** is that there is an alternative to earthly treasure / wealth which so easily passes away and slips from our grasp. It is a “spiritual” treasure or wealth that we can have through knowing and serving YHWH!

Alexander observes that **יָצִיט**, **chosen**, our “treasure / wealth,” “according to its etymology means strength, but in usage is applied exclusively to that arising from wealth.” (P. 8) We think this is correct, simply by looking at the other uses of this root word.

wisdom and knowledge.³⁴

³³The Hebrew word is the feminine plural יְשׁוּעוֹת, **yeshu(oth**, “salvations,” “deliverances.” **Brown-Driver-Briggs** defines by “welfare,” “prosperity,” “deliverance,” “salvation” (“by God, primarily from external evils, but often with added spiritual idea”). **Holladay** defines by “help,” “prosperity,” “salvation.”

It is to be noted that the plural noun means earthly “salvations / deliverances” –not just “pie in the sky in the sweet bye and bye,” but help in difficulties and even prosperity are included—certainly not to the exclusion of salvation and deliverance that go far beyond this earthly life. Knowing and serving YHWH imparts this kind of wonderful “treasure” or “wealth”: salvations / deliverances!

³⁴The Hebrew phrase is חֵכְמַת וְדַעַת, **chokhmah wadha(ath**, literally “wisdom of and knowledge.” The noun for wisdom is in the construct state, meaning that ordinarily it is related to a following noun, but which is not the case here.

See the article on **chakham**, “wisdom” by H.-P. Mueller in **Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament**, pp. 364-85, from which we quote:

“Within the didactic [instructive] discourses of **Proverbs 1-9** (especially in **chapter 2**), there are several passages that treat the theme of how wisdom is come by. Wisdom may consist in a good head for business, which brings riches...Wisdom (in the more comprehensive sense) also brings honor...and long life...as well as its benefits, נְעִים, **no(am** [delightfulness, pleasantness] and שְׁלוֹם, **shalom** [completeness, soundness, welfare, peace]. **Proverbs 3:18** therefore calls it ‘a tree of life,’ so that those who hold it fast are happy. According to **Proverbs 2:12, 17**, the knowledge that comes through wisdom can ‘save’ or ‘deliver,’ both ‘from the way of evil men of perverted speech,’ and above all ‘from the foreign woman.’ Whoever listens to wisdom dwells secure (**Proverbs 1:33**). In short, whoever is wise is wise to his own benefit (**Proverbs 9:12**). Therefore wisdom should be sought like silver or treasure (**Proverbs 2:4**); its gain and profit are better than silver and gold, better than corals and gems (**Proverbs 3:14-15**)...Such statements do not depreciate material values in favor of spiritual or intellectual...

“In **Proverbs**...’Lady Wisdom’...becomes a soteriological figure [one who teaches about salvation], as does ‘Wisdom’ in **Proverbs 8:12** and elsewhere. Thus personified she cries aloud in the streets and marketplaces...Like a mother she comes to the neophyte [novice] and welcomes him like a young wife...She builds a house and invites men to a generous banquet (**Proverbs 9:1, 4**)...Indeed, Wisdom loves those who love her...and is Deified as the Giver of life (**Proverbs 8:35**)...Therefore personified Wisdom must not be forsaken...but loved...and embraced... addressed as a sister and intimate friend...and watched for daily at her gate...Anyone who refuses to listen to her brings upon himself calamity, panic, and death.” (Pp. 379-80)

Fear of / reverence for YHWH--³⁵

it (is) His treasury!³⁶

33:7³⁷ הַן אֲרָאִים צַעֲקוֹ חֲצָה

³⁵The Hebrew phrase is יִרְאֵת יְהוָה, **yir)ath YHWH**, which we translate by “fear of / reverence for YHWH.” It is “fear,” because YHWH is our Creator and Judge; but it is not a fear that causes us to run away, trembling. Rather, it is a “fear” that draws us to YHWH, our Father, the unique Source of our lives, to listen, to obey, to worship. It is not a “fear” that weakens and disables us, but rather a reverence that makes us strong, and that unites us with YHWH for all of life, making us unafraid!

How do you understand the “fear of YHWH”? Are you afraid of God?

³⁶Here the Hebrew phrase for “His treasury” is אֲצִרָו, **)otsaro**. The noun אֲצִרָו is defined by **Brown-Driver-Briggs** as “treasure, store, treasury, storehouse.” **Holladay** defines the noun in the plural as meaning “storehouses,” or “treasure.” He adds that it has a “cosmic” meaning, the “treasure” of Yahweh in heaven.

So what are we to make of this **verse 6**? It teaches us that the fear of / reverence for YHWH is a treasury—and that Divine treasury is located in our hearts, hearts that “fear / revere”—and therefore love and serve God fully, without reservation.

Among the treasures that we will find is “stability” for all the times / situations which we face in life. Fear of / reverence for YHWH is the rudder of a sea-going vessel. It keeps us on course, especially in times of storm. Living in the fear of / reverence for YHWH will fill our lives with experiences of salvations / deliverances of all sorts, especially in terms of forgiveness of sins, and deliverance from physical dangers and harms. It will impart wisdom and knowledge—of ethics, of moral purity, of compassion and care, especially for the widow, the orphan, the poor, the immigrant—those most in need of our help. That fear of / reverence for YHWH opens up a treasury / storehouse of riches within the believer’s heart!

What about you? Has your heart become a treasury / storehouse of riches? If not, get to know YHWH! It is an open possibility for anyone!

³⁷Oswalt entitles **verses 7-24** “The Lord is our King.” He entitles **verses 7-16** “Now I will arise.”

Motyer entitles **verses 7-12** “The judgment of the peoples.”

He states that “The background to this is the Assyrian times. The *brave men* [אֲרָאִים] are the military leaders coming belatedly, like Hezekiah (**Isaiah 37:3**), to a realization of their ineffectiveness. The *envoys*, those sent to negotiate the terms of

(continued...)

³⁷(...continued)

surrender (**2 Kings 18:14**) now weep as they discover how they have been duped. Neither human power nor human wisdom have proved sufficient. The invasion has left *highways* and *roads* deserted, and the prospects of peace by treaty are in ruins along with the whole landscape.” (P. 264)

Slotki comments that in **verses 7-9**, “the present desolation, with its bitter disappointment and ruin, is described.” (P. 155)

Oswalt states that “**Verses 7-9** depict a situation where all hope is lost. The heroes cannot help, nor can the diplomats. The destroyer will not abide by his agreements (compare **Isaiah 33:1**) but comes on for destruction. Thus everyone mourns, even the land itself.

“Although the text makes no specific allusion to its historical context, it is certainly most logical to associate it with that time when Sennacherib had accepted the tribute he had demanded for leaving Jerusalem unmolested and then proceeded straight ahead with plans to destroy the city.” (P. 595)

Kaiser entitles **verses 7-9** “The rule of the tyrant,” and states that “The three verses that follow describe in a few bold strokes what will take place in the country as the destroyer advances...

“We are surely correct in seeing **verse 7** through the eyes of an inhabitant of Jerusalem who was expecting the tempest of the army of the nations to descend...

“We can perhaps assume that the poet is thinking of a lost battle and of the failure of the peace negotiations offered immediately afterwards: the victor does not want peace, but unconditional surrender...

“What we have is probably a characterization of the man which is meant to make clear the hopeless situation of Jerusalem: this is the kind of man he is! No one can make a treaty with him, because he breaks it, rejects the statement of the witnesses who were present when the treaty was made and in any case holds people in contempt...

“The listing of the areas of Palestine affected, first Lebanon in the north and then the plain of Sharon in the center of the west coast south of Carmel, and finally the land of Bashan east of the Jordan, famed for its pastures, and finally Carmel itself...is probably once again a hidden allusion to the theme of the enemy from the north (compare **Jeremiah 1:13ff.; 4:6; 6:1, 22; 10:22; 13:10; Isaiah 14:31**) but also gives us an impression of the scale of the enemy advance, extending across the whole country.” (Pp. 344-45)

(continued...)

מְלַאכֵי שְׁלוֹם מֵרַיבֵּינָן:

Look—אַרְאֵלָם, **erelam** (their heroes? their Arielite?)³⁸ cried out (in the) out-of-doors
messengers of peace³⁹ weep bitterly.⁴⁰

33:8⁴¹ נִשְׁמוּ מִסְּלוֹת

³⁷(...continued)

Alexander translates **verse 7**: “Behold, their valiant ones cry without; the ambassadors of peace weep bitterly.”

³⁸Slotki’s translation has “their valiant ones,” but Slotki states that “The Hebrew אַרְאֵלָם, (**er**)ellam is obscure. Some translate ‘God’s lions’ (i.e. heroes) or ‘inhabitants of Ariel.’” (P. 155)

The translations we are looking at have “their valiant ones,” “The Arielites,” “their brave men,” “Ariel,” and ἐν τῷ φόβῳ ὑμῶν, “in your fear / in the fear of you.”

Alexander comments that “The [Aramaic] Targum and some other ancient versions seem to treat [the noun] as a contraction of [‘I will see to them’ or ‘I will be seen by them’]...The **Septuagint** version has ἐν τῷ φόβῳ ὑμῶν, ‘in their fear of you.’ Most of the other modern writers identify the word substantially with *Ariel* in **Isaiah 29:1**.” (P. 9)

Motyer states that “In context it is impossible not to hear an echo of the ‘Ariel’ of **Isaiah 29:1, 7**, probably with the thought of humankind usurping the prerogative of the Lord and trusting their own ‘fire-power.’ Both ‘hawks’ (*brave men*) and ‘doves’ (*envoys of peace*) are equally at their wits’ end.” (P. 264)

³⁹Alexander states that “The messengers mentioned...are not those sent by Hezekiah to Isaiah (**2 Kings 19:2**), nor the Maccabees, as being both priests and heroes...nor the ministers of the gospel, nor the two apocalyptic witnesses...but probably the three men sent by Hezekiah to Rabshakeh (**2 Kings 18:18**), or perhaps the bearers of the tribute, weeping on account of Sennacherib’s refusal to fulfil his promises.” (P. 9)

⁴⁰Slotki comments “The envoys sent to negotiate peace with the invaders are overcome with emotion because the enemy had violated the treaty.” (P. 155)

⁴¹Alexander translates **verse 8**: “*The highways are wasted, the wayfarer ceaseth; he breaks the covenant, despises cities, values no man.*”

He comments that “These are not the words of the ambassadors reporting the condition of the country...but of the prophet himself, describing it. The scene presented is...the actual condition of Judea during the Assyrian invasion...The meaning is not that

(continued...)

שֶׁבֶת עֵבֶר אֶרֶח

הַפֶּר בְּרִית

מֵאֵס עָרִים

לֹא חָשַׁב אָנוּשׁ:

Highways were desolate;

one crossing over a road ceased;⁴²

He⁴³ broke a covenant.

He despised cities.⁴⁴

⁴¹(...continued)

[Sennacherib or the Assyrian] rejected the cities offered him by Hezekiah...nor that he barbarously disregarded the condition of the conquered country...but that he despised its defenses as unable to resist him. The last words may either mean that he has no regard to any man's interest or wishes, or that he does not value human life." (P. 9)

⁴²Slotki says "For a similar picture of desolation, compare **Judges 5:6**." (P. 155) In that verse, the Judge Deborah is speaking about conditions when she became Judge:

In (the) days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in (the) days of Yael,
highways ceased, and those walking (on) pathways.
They would walk (on) crooked / roundabout paths.

Oswalt comments that "Without a condition of peace, the heavily laden caravans would not dare set out. The 'traverser of the way' will cease his journeying because he does not know when he will be plundered." (P. 596)

⁴³Slotki states that the third person masculine singular pronoun refers to Sennacherib. (P. 155)

⁴⁴Motyer translates literally: 'He has nullified the covenant, despised cities.' In other words, he has set no value on people, acted without moral concern, scorned the fortified opposition ranged against him, and set no value on human life as such. This is a brilliant analysis of the power-politician." (P. 265)

Slotki states that "the cities" is "perhaps an allusion to *all the fortified cities of Judah* which Sennacherib had captured (**Isaiah 36:1**)."

(continued...)

He did not consider a man.

33:9⁴⁵ אֲבֵל אִמְלֵלָה אֲרִיז
הַחֲפִיר לְבָנוֹן קָמַל
הִיָּה הַשְּׂרֹן כְּעַרְבָּה
וְנֶעַר בַּשָּׁן וְכַרְמֵל:

It mourned, it languished—earth / land.

It was ashamed—Lebanon—it decayed.

The Sharon became like the desert-plain,

and (they) were stirred up—Bashan and Carmel!⁴⁶

⁴⁴(...continued)

Where our Hebrew text reads עֲרִיִם, (**ariym**, “cities,” 1QIs^a has עֲדִיִם, (**edhiym**, “witnesses.” It is very easy in a hand-written text to confuse the letters ר and ד, which is the only difference between the two Hebrew plural nouns.

Oswalt thinks the reading “witnesses” is best. He says “While the Masoretic Text’s ‘cities’ is not impossible, the idea of despising or rejecting the witnesses to the covenant is a much more likely parallel to breaking the covenant.” (P. 597)

⁴⁵Alexander translates / comments on **verse 9**: “*The land mourneth, languisheth; Lebanon is ashamed, it pines away’ Sharon is like a wilderness, and Bashan and Carmel cast (their leaves). The most fertile and flourishing parts of the country are described as desolate. That the language is figurative, may be inferred from the fact that none of the places mentioned were in Judah.*” (Pp. 9-10)

Oswalt states that “This verse expresses the solidarity of people and land as conceived in the **Old Testament**.” (P. 597)

⁴⁶Slotki states that the land mourning was “in sympathy with the sufferings of the inhabitants. Lebanon, Sharon, Bashan and Carmel are named as the most fertile places (compare **Isaiah 35:2**).” (Pp. 155-56)

Oswalt says that “The four regions mentioned are those which were the most fruitful. Now they are barren. The interplay between fruitfulness and barrenness and the question of whence they come is a great favorite of Isaiah’s. For him the answer is plain: barrenness is a result of self-reliance; fruitfulness is the result of reliance on God. Here, then, we have one more figurative expression of that truth.” (P. 597)

33:10⁴⁷ עֵתָהּ אֶקְוֶם

יֹאמֶר יְהוָה

עֵתָהּ אֶרְוֶם

עֵתָהּ אֲנַשָּׂא:

⁴⁷Kaiser entitles **verses 10-13** “Yahweh’s intervention,” and comments that “In the face of the most acute distress, and the irresistible and incessant onrush of the army of the nations against Jerusalem (compare **verses 2-3**), Yahweh considers that the moment for His intervention has come (compare **Psalm 12:6; Deuteronomy 10:35; Psalms 68:2; 3:8**; also **Psalms 94:2 and 7:7**)...

“In the interests of the image that follows, the vanity of the enemy’s purpose is compared to a pregnancy and birth of hay (compare **Isaiah 5:24**) and straw...The enemy army delivers itself up with its leaders to its ruin, thus as it were providing the material with which it is burnt...

“It is naturally Yahweh’s fiery breath and His lightnings flashing down upon the attackers...When they are burnt to lime, no remnant of them remains in its original setting; the souls of the dead find no dwelling place which holds them together and they therefore dissolve and are brought to an immediate and total end...a complete annihilation of the attackers...

“That so mighty an event as the destruction of the nations advancing under the leadership of the destroyer cannot remain hidden, but is bound to reveal the power of Yahweh to the whole of mankind, can be taken for granted.” (P. 346)

Slotki comments on **verses 10-12** that they contain “God’s answer to the prayer in **verses 2-3**.” (P. 156)

Alexander translates **verse 10**: “*Now will I arise, saith Jehovah, now will I be lifted up, now will I exalt Myself.*”

He comments that “The emphasis is...upon the adverb *now*, which is twice repeated to imply that the time for the Divine interposition is arrived, and that there shall be no more delay.” (P. 10)

Oswalt states that in **verse 10**, “the language...is reminiscent of **Isaiah 33:5**. When God’s majesty is fully seen, the world recognizes its own smallness and its need to come to terms with the Almighty.” (Pp. 508-09)

33:5 YHWH was exalted,
because He dwells (in the) height.
He filled Zion (with) justice and right-relationship.

Now I will arise,

YHWH says.

Now I will be raised up;

Now I will be lifted up!⁴⁸

33:11⁴⁹ תִּהְרֹו חֲשָׁשׁ

תִּלְדֹו קֶשׁ

רוּחְכֶם אֵשׁ

⁴⁸Motyer comments on **verse 10**, stating that “Now (עַתָּה), (**attah**, the emphatic particle of time, is used before three synonymous verbs. This creates a strong emphasis, first on the idea of exaltation, and secondly, on the fact that the crucial moment has arrived.” (P. 265)

⁴⁹Motyer comments on **verses 11-12** that “When the Lord rises to act three things happen simultaneously. First, there is the inevitable outcome of past decision and action. They have ‘conceived’ and now they must *give birth*. What an indictment of life without God—plans, no more than *chaff*, achievements, no more than *straw*!...

“Secondly, sin boomerangs, so that the igniting agent is *your breath* / ‘spirit’...

“Thirdly, there is Divine punitive action...Thus, the outcome of sin is inevitable. The tragedy of sin is that it ruins the life of the sinner; the danger of sin is that it excites the wrath of God.” (P. 265)

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 11**: “*Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble; your breath (as) fire shall devour you.* The first clause contains a common Scriptural figure for failure and frustration...Chaff and stubble are not named as being dry and innutritious...but as worthless and perishable substances.” (P. 10)

Oswalt says, “Although the person addressed is not specified here, the context makes it clear that it is the destroyer...Again there is similarity to **Isaiah 33:1**,

Woe (to) one despoiling, and you were not despoiled;

and acting faithlessly, and they did not act faithlessly against him!

When you are finished despoiling, you will be despoiled!

When you have ceased to act faithlessly, they will act faithlessly against you!

...So the prophet asserts that there is justice in the world. It if comes too slowly for most of us, still it comes. Although what Sennacherib received outside Jerusalem’s gates was only a taste of Assyria’s ultimate destruction, it was a genuine taste and one which would be violently completed within a century (609 B.C.E.)” (P. 598)

תֹּאכְלֵכֶם:

You (plural)⁵⁰ conceive chaff;
you give birth to stubble.

Your spirit / anger⁵¹ (is a) fire—
it will devour you!⁵²

33:12⁵³ וְהָיוּ עַמִּים מְשֻׂרְפוֹת שֵׂדֶר

קוֹצִים כְּסוּחִים בְּאֵשׁ יִצְתּוּ:

And peoples⁵⁴ will be burnings of lime,
thorns cut down, in the fire they will be burned!⁵⁵

⁵⁰Slotki states that this plural “you” [his “ye”] refers to “The enemy; they provide the means for their own destruction.” (P. 156)

⁵¹Slotki’s translation has “Your breath,” and Slotki states that this means “your fury directed against your enemies.” (P. 156) The Hebrew phrase here is רוּחְכֶם, **ruchakhem**. The “your” is plural; the noun רוּחַ, **ruach** is ambiguous—it can mean “breath,” or “wind,” or “spirit / Spirit.”

⁵²Human anger, blazing like fire, will devour, burn up the human who has it!

⁵³Alexander translates / comments on **verse 12**: “*And nations shall be lime-kilns (or burnings of lime); thorns cut up, in the fire they shall burn. By nations we are not to understand the different races mingled in Sennacherib’s army, but all nations that incur the wrath of God.*” (P. 10)

⁵⁴Slotki states that “the peoples” may be referring to the Assyrians, as in **verse 3**. (P. 156)

⁵⁵Alexander comments that “The ideas expressed are those of quickness and intensity.” (P. 10)

Oswalt comments that “The metaphors used here emphasize the completeness of the destruction to come. So when a rock like limestone is burned it is reduced to dust [but of course, dust still exists!]...And despite the hazardous nature of thorns when they are alive, once they are cut and dried, fire can consume them almost completely in a very short time [fire turns them to smoke, but smoke is not nothing!]. So it would be with Assyria and later with Babylon. For all their pomp and glory, each one’s collapse came with great suddenness.” (P. 598)

(continued...)

33:13⁵⁶ שִׁמְעוּ רְחוֹקִים אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי

וְדַעוּ קְרוֹבִים גְּבֻרָתִי:

⁵⁵(...continued)

But just as with limestone and thorns, which still exist, though in a different form, so it was with Assyria and Babylon. By far the large majority of their citizens continued to exist following the destruction of their kingdoms, although now in different relationships to different peoples.

What do you think?

⁵⁶Motyer entitles **verses 13-24** “The first universal proclamation: the new Zion, its people and its king.”

He comments that “From the composite eschatological picture of **verses 1-12** Isaiah selects one theme for further elucidation: the new Zion, which he began to describe in **verses 5-6.**” (P 265)

He entitles **verses 13-16** “Zion’s people.”

Slotki comments that **verse 13** “is taken either as the conclusion of the preceding section or as an introduction to the one following.” (P. 156)

Alexander translates **verse 13**: “Hear, ye far, what I have done, and know, ye near, My might.”

He comments that by “far” and “near,” he means “all without exception.”

Motyer comments that “The thought of a summons to the world is well-established in the cult [Israel’s worship in the temple] (Psalms 47:1; 96:3, 10; 98:4). Behind it lies the assumption that what the Lord has done for His people has world-wide significance, both as a revelation of the Lord and as a message of salvation...

“The essence of the proclamation is ‘the wonderful works of God (**Acts 2:11**), what I have done. Power (גְּבוּרָה, **gebhurah**, ‘strength’ ‘might’ ‘warrior power’...is the Lord’s effective power over every foe. The first move of the people of God in the world is informative. The world is to be won by persuasion of the truth, ‘to acknowledge’ ‘know’ My power (**Joshua 2:9-11** [Rahab’s statement to the Israelite spies, hidden on her rooftop; a very appropriate reference!]).” (P. 266)

Hear,⁵⁷ those who are far distant, what I did;
and know, those who are near, My greatness!

33:14⁵⁸ פָּחַדוּ בְּצִיּוֹן חַטָּאִים

⁵⁷The verb here, שִׁמְעוּ, **shim(u**, is masculine plural imperative, “hear!” In the next line, the verb דַּעוּ, **dhe(u**, is also masculine plural imperative, “know!” But 1QIsa and the Greek translation have the imperfect tense, “they will hear,” and “they will know.”

⁵⁸Slotki comments on **verses 14-16** that they depict “The purged moral condition of Israel resulting from God’s marvelous deeds which they were privileged to witness.” (P. 156)

Kaiser entitles **verses 14-16** “The conditions of participation in salvation.”

He comments that “Inevitably all those who have no longer observed the Divine will will seriously be afraid and will ask trembling (compare **Psalms 15:1; 48:7**) what will become of them. The God Who has destroyed the enemy with His fire is now present in Jerusalem and is a devouring fire (compare **Deuteronomy 4:24; 9:3**, and also **Psalm 50:3; Exodus 19:18; 1 Kings 19:12**)...

“Their questions, which coincide with the words of those who seek access into the sanctuary (compare **Psalms 15:1; 24:3**), find an answer which points not to all kinds of cultic demands but to the social loyalty which stands at the heart of all **Old Testament** religion, that of righteousness (compare **Psalm 15:2a; Proverbs 10:9; 14:2**. This is displayed in truthful utterances...the renunciation of profit from oppression ...the rejection of bribes in legal actions...and also, of course, a refusal to take part in any plans for murder...and the avoidance of evil in general...

“For the righteous there are as it were fortresses in the rock on high mountains, in which he is protected from all troubles...and in which he will lack neither food nor drink.” (Pp. 346-47)

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 14**: “*Afraid in Zion are the sinners; not at or near Zion, meaning the Assyrians...but in Zion, i.e. in Jerusalem, referring to the impious Jews themselves; trembling has seized the impious, a parallel expression to sinners...The persons so described are the wicked and unbelieving portion of the Jews...*

‘What follows might be understood as the language of the prophet himself, giving a reason for the terror of the wicked. Interpreters appear to be unanimous, however, in making it the language of the wicked Jews themselves...

(continued...)

⁵⁸(...continued)

“Some refer [the statement] to the past, and understand the verse to mean that they are now in terror who once said thus and thus...But the great mass of interpreters, both old and new, suppose this to be given not as the former but the present language of the wicked Jews, when actually seized with terror...

“Aben Ezra [holds that it means] the wrath of God as exercised against the Assyrians themselves. This is the interpretation commonly adopted. It supposes the words to be expressive of the feelings excited by the slaughter of Sennacherib’s host. If this be a specimen of God’s vindicatory justice, what may we expect? *Who of us can dwell with (this) devouring fire? Who of us can dwell with these perpetual burnings?...*

“Many make the language still more emphatic, by supposing that the prophet argues from the less to the greater. If these are God’s temporal judgments, what must His eternal wrath be? If the momentary strokes of His hand are thus resistless, *who of us can dwell with the devouring fire, who of us can dwell with everlasting burnings?* The last words may then be taken in their strictest and most unrestricted sense. Henderson thinks they have no meaning if they do not refer to eternal punishment.” (P. 11)

Motyer comments on **verse 14** that “The people who live in Zion have a terrifying awareness of the seriousness of sin and the impossibility that sinners can dwell in the presence of holiness.” (P. 266) Indeed!

Oswalt states that “The issue is, what will it take to endure in an environment so hostile as endless fire?” (P. 599) On God as fire, see:

Deuteronomy 4:24,

Because YHWH your God,
He (is) a devouring fire,
a jealous God!

Deuteronomy 9:3,

And you will know today
that YHWH your God, He is the One crossing over before you;
a devouring fire;
He will destroy them;
and He will humble / subdue them before you;
and He will dispossess them,
and He will destroy them quickly,
just as YHWH said to you.

Hebrews 12:29,

(continued...)

⁵⁸(...continued)

καὶ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν πῦρ καταναλίσκον.

For also the God of ours—a fire, a consuming one!

It is important to consider this matter of the relationship between YHWH and “fire.” Undoubtedly throughout the **Hebrew Bible**, the imagery of fire connotes Divine displeasure and judgment that comes upon disobedient people, YHWH’s “enemies,” including a disobedient Israel.

But also, fire gives light, and YHWH is depicted as fiery light. In addition, fire plays an integral role in the use of metals, shaping them, purifying them for constructive purposes, burning out the impurities in the metallic ore, making it pure. Fire enables the cooking of meat and various foods; it imparts heat in the midst of freezing cold. In the **Song of Songs / Song of Solomon, 8:6**, it is stated concerning the love between a young man and woman:

Because strong as the death--love;
severe as *sheol* / the grave--jealousy / passion.
Its flames are flames of fire,
which are a flame of Yah!

These last four lines of **verse 6** are given varying translations:

King James, “for love *is* strong as death; jealousy *is* cruel as the grave: the coals thereof *are* coals of fire, *which hath* a most vehement flame.”

Tanakh, “For love is fierce as death, Passion is mighty as Sheol; Its darts are darts of fire, A blazing flame.”

New Revised Standard, “for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame.”

New International, “for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.”

New Jerusalem, “For love is strong as Death, passion as relentless as Sheol. The flash of it is a flash of fire, a flame of Yahweh himself.”

Rahlf, ὅτι κραταιὰ ὡς θάνατος ἀγάπη σκληρὸς ὡς ἄδης ζῆλος περίπτερα αὐτῆς περίπτερα πυρός φλόγες αὐτῆς, Because strong as death--love; hard / rough like the grave / underworld. Its [love’s; αὐτῆς is feminine singular, and ἀγάπη is a feminine singular noun; ζῆλος is masculine singular] sparks, its sparks flames of fire.”

The last Hebrew word in the Hebrew text of **verse 6** is a long, difficult word:

שְׁלֵהֲבֵתִיָּהּ, **shalehebhethyah**, which we define as “which (is) a flame of Yah” (compare **New Jerusalem**.) We think the word is a combination of three parts:

1. **sha**, an Aramaic-style prefix meaning “which,” perhaps standing for אֲשֶׁר.

(continued...)

אַחֲזָה רְעֵדָה חֲנָפִים

מִי יִגֹּר לָנוּ אֵשׁ אוֹכֵלָה

מִי־יִגֹּר לָנוּ מִזְקָרֵי עוֹלָם:

Missers-of-the-mark in Zion were in dread;

trembling took strong hold of profane people.⁵⁹

Who will be a temporary resident for us⁶⁰ (in) devouring fire?

⁵⁸(...continued)

2. **lehebheth**, the construct form of **lehabhah**, meaning “flame of”; and
3. **yah**, short for YHWH.

Here is a Divine flame that instead of destroying, unites male and female as one! As we feel love surging within our hearts for our mate, we are feeling God’s flame burning inside of us! It is a dangerous emotion, but a highly creative flame, from which comes the new generation!

If God is this kind of a consuming fire, it is a fire we do not need to be afraid of. It is, of course, a fire that will devour the evil within us. It will purify us, cleanse us. But it will also give us light, and warmth, and creative energy. It is a Divine fire that will enable us to become one with our Creator Father.

What do you think? Are you afraid of the Divine fire?

⁵⁹If we want to continue to walk in our own chosen ways rather than God’s ways, we should certainly be in dread; If we care nothing for God and His ways, then it will be a good thing if trembling takes hold of us. But if we recognize our sinfulness, and our “profanity,” then entering into the fire of God will mean our salvation—our cleansing, our purifying, our new creation!

⁶⁰The phrase in Hebrew is מִי יִגֹּר לָנוּ, literally “who will be a temporary resident / immigrant for us?” The translations we are looking at have “dwell,” or “live,” or “survive.” The Greek translation has the quite different τὴν ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν ὅτι πῦρ καίεται τίς ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν τὸν τόπον τὸν αἰώνιον, “Who will announce to you (plural) that a fire is burning? Who will announce to you the place, the eternal one?”

We think the question means, Who of us is good enough, pure enough, to even be a temporary resident there? As Motyer says, “To dwell (**yaghur**) is ‘to reside as an alien,’ a person without a natural right to be there.” (P. 266)

(continued...)

⁶⁰(...continued)

Slotki refers to **Psalm 15**, which answers the question in a very positive way, using this same verb, יָגַחַר, **yaghur**, and then following it up with the phrase מִי־יִשְׁכֵּן, “Who will settle down / dwell?”

- 1 YHWH, who will spend time / be a temporary resident in Your tent / tabernacle?
Who will settle down / dwell on Your set-apart mountain?
- 2 One walking (in) completeness / wholeness,
and doing righteousness,
and speaking truth in his heart.
- 3 He did not have slander upon his tongue;
he did not do evil to his neighbor.
And he did not raise a reproach upon / against his companion / relative.
- 4 A rejected person was despised in his eyes;
and / but ones fearing / reverencing YHWH he will honor.
He was sworn to cause harm / repay evil (?),
and he will not change!
- 5 His silver / money he did not give / lend with interest;
and he did not take a bribe concerning an innocent person.
One doing these things will not be shaken to long-lasting time!

Compare **Psalm 24:3-5**:

- 3 Who shall go up into YHWH's Mountain?
And who shall stand in [the] Place of His Set-Apartness?
- 4 [One with] innocent hands, and a clean heart;
who has not lifted up his innermost being for nothingness,
and he has not taken oath for deceit[ful purposes]!
- 5 He will lift up a blessing from YHWH,
and righteousness from the God of his salvation / deliverance!

In fact, **Isaiah 33:15-16a** answers the question in a very similar way:

- 15 One who walks (in) right-relationships / righteousnesses (a plural noun),
and who speaks upright things;
one who rejects unjust gain by extortions;
who shakes off his hands from laying hold on the bribe;
who shuts his ear from hearing (plans for) murder;
who closes his eyes from looking at evil--
- 16a he will dwell (on the) heights...

Do you agree with Isaiah and the psalmist? Or is this a Pharisaical answer, that thinks human beings can be good enough to merit permanent dwelling in the Divine Presence? But unlike the Pharisees, it doesn't insist on the 613 commandments of the Mosaic Torah, but rather on some eleven ethical / moral principles of living (in **Psalm**

(continued...)

Who will be a temporary resident for us (in) long-lasting burning masses?⁶¹

33:15⁶² הַלֵּךְ צְדָקוֹת

⁶⁰(...continued)

15), six ethical / moral principles of living (in **Isaiah**), and five ethical / moral principles of living in **Psalms 24**. Do you think anyone can fulfill these eleven or six or five ethical / moral principles in such a way as to be able to live in the Divine presence? The three passages, **Isaiah 33**, along with **Psalms 15** and **24** say it is possible. Motyer states that “This, and this only, is the person who can enter the new Zion and dwell in the presence of the holy fire.” (P. 266) What do you say?

How do you think Jesus would answer the question? What do you think of the early tradition in Christianity that Jesus told a convicted thief suffering capital punishment on one of the crosses next to him, that he would be with him in paradise (that is, living in the Divine presence) that very day? Of course, that dying thief had no way to fulfill the requirements set forth by these passages. All he could do was ask to be remembered by Jesus—and that is what he did.

⁶¹In these last two lines of **verse 14** two parallel phrases occur:

אֵשׁ אוֹכֵלָהּ, **jesh)okhelah**, “devouring fire,” and
מוֹקְדֵי עוֹלָם, **moqedhey (olam**, “burning masses of long-lasting time.”

That is, for Isaiah, to live in the Divine presence even temporarily, means to live in the midst of devouring fire and enduring burning masses. People who are afraid of “going to hell” are afraid because of their belief that they will enter “hell-fire.” But according to **Isaiah 33:14**, those who even temporarily draw near to YHWH draw near to ‘devouring fire.’

Who is asking this question? Is it the sinful, the profane? We think it is. They recognize how entering into the Divine Fire will destroy their way of life—it will mean radical transformation and deeply rooted change—who of us, they ask, dares to do that? Oswalt comments that “The issue is, what will it take to endure in an environment so hostile as endless fire?” (P. 599)

Are you afraid of that fire? Do not be. It is a cleansing, purifying fire, that will only burn up evil! It is in the midst of the Divine fire that we will find God!

⁶²Alexander comments on and translates **verse 15**: “This verse contains a description of the righteous man, not unlike that in the fifteenth and twenty-fourth Psalms. Walking righteousnesses, i.e., leading a righteous life. *Walk* is a common Scriptural expression for the course of conduct...*And speaking right things...rectitude or righteousness...Rejecting or despising* (or, combining both ideas, *rejecting with contempt*) *the gain of oppressions or extortions. Shaking his hands from taking hold of the bribe*, an expressive gesture of indignant refusal...The true sense is forcibly conveyed in...shakes his hands that no bribe may stick to them...and...*that won't*

(continued...)

⁶²(...continued)

receive any, but when they are put into his hands shakes them out...Stopping his ears from hearing bloods, i.e. plans of murder...the proposal of bloodshed...Shutting his eyes from looking at evil, i.e. from conniving at it, or even beholding it as an indifferent spectator...

“According to the natural connection of the passage, this verse would seem to contain the answer to the question in **verse 14**, and is so understood by those who make the question mean, Who can stand before this terrible [we say, ‘terrifying’] Jehovah?

Oswalt comments on **verse 15** that it “offers the answer to the question posed in **verse 14**. Although those who know the **Bible** will perhaps see it as familiar and predictable (**Psalms 15** and **24** are very similar), it is in fact a rather strange answer. What kind of change must a human being undergo to live with God [even for a short time, temporarily]? It is not a change of essence but a change of character...This is the truth which the Hebrews discovered at Sinai (**Leviticus 19:2**,

Speak to all (the) community of Israel’s people.
And you shall say to them,
Set-apart people, you shall be.
For set-apart (am) I, YHWH your God!

and which Isaiah also recognized in his personal Sinai [see **chapter 6**]. If we are to dwell with God as His guests, we must share His character.

“The elements of that character are described in three couplets. The first describes the general style of life: a manifestation in life and speech of what is right and straight. The second and third amplify this element, making it plain that no privatistic righteousness will do. Gain achieved through oppression and graft is forbidden, as is conspiracy in any act which will harm or murder someone. (Closing the eyes and ears does not mean ignoring social evil, but refusing to be a part of such conspiracies.) Like all the prophets, Isaiah abhors a religion which suggests that cultic acts alone obviate any necessity for radical change in our behavior toward others (**Isaiah 1:10-17; 58:5-7**; compare **Jeremiah 7:10; Ezekiel 23:37-39; Hosea 4:1-4; Amos 5:21-24; Malachi 3:5**, etc.)

“But is this to say that it is possible by living a righteous life to merit union with God? No, for that would be to confuse the product with the method, a confusion into which Judaism was to fall. **Romans 7** is the cry of such a good Jew...

“The goal is always the same, conformity to the character of God. The revelation of God’s grace in Christ has not changed the goal. But it has shown us that we were going about reaching the goal in the wrong way.” (Pp. 599-600)

(continued...)

וְדַבֵּר מִיִּשְׁרָיִם
מֵאִס בְּבַצַּע מַעֲשֵׂקוֹת
נֶעַר כַּפְּיוֹ מִתְמַךְ בַּשֹּׁחַד
אֵטֵם אָזְנוֹ מִשְׁמֹעַ דְּמִים
וְעַצֵּם עֵינָיו מִרְאוֹת בְּרָע:

One who walks (in) righteousneses,
and who speaks upright things;
one who rejects unjust gain by extortions;
who shakes off his hands from laying hold on the bribe;
who shuts his ear from hearing (plans for) murder,⁶³
who closes his eyes from looking at evil--

33:16⁶⁴ הוּא מְרוֹמִים יִשְׁכֵן
מִצְדוֹת סְלַעִים מְשֻׁבָּבוֹ
לְחֶמּוֹ נָתַן

⁶²(...continued)

This is the view of a committed Christian. But what if you were living long before the coming of Christ, and you read **Isaiah 33** alongside **Psalms 15** and **24**? Would you not conclude that it is possible for human beings to live in such a way as to be able to enter into the presence of God and to “dwell with God”?

⁶³Slotki’s translation has “that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood,” and Slotki comments that this means “Refusing to listen to and take part in plots to murder.” (P. 157)

⁶⁴Alexander translates / comments on **verse 16**: “*He* (the character described in **verse 15**) *high places shall inhabit*. This does not denote exalted station in society, but safety from enemies, in being above their reach...*Fastnesses (or strongholds) of rocks (shall be) his lofty place*, i.e. his refuge or his place of safety...To the idea of security is added that of sustenance, without which the first would be of no avail. *His bread is given...His water sure...secured...*”

The verse is an assurance, clothed in figurative language, of general protection and support to the righteous.” (P. 13)

מִיָּמֵי נֹאֲמָנִים:

he will dwell (on the) heights;⁶⁵

rocky fortresses / Masadas (will be) his refuge;⁶⁶

his food supplied,

his water(s) unfailing.⁶⁷

33:17⁶⁸ מֶלֶךְ בִּיפְיוֹ תַחְזִינָה עֵינַיִךְ

⁶⁵Slotki comments that “The righteous man is depicted as [dwelling in] an impregnable fortress which will withstand any siege.” (P. 157)

Oswalt, in spite of his comments on **verse 15**, states concerning this first line of **verse 16**, “The person who has made God’s character the goal of his or her life dwells with God in the high places.” (P. 600) But the text says nothing about making God’s character the goal of life—it simply says doing these things.

⁶⁶Those who have visited the massive rock mountain Masada near the southwestern corner of the Dead Sea, will hear its name in this text: מִצְדוֹת סֵלַעִים, **metsadhoth sela(iym)**, “strongholds of rocks.” On the Internet, google “Masada.”

Motyer comments that “Mountain fortress is (literally) ‘strong places of the cliffs,’ i.e. at the top of inaccessible cliff faces.” (P. 267)

⁶⁷Oswalt comments, “Furthermore, this person [who dwells with God] has a source of supply of every need in God. Bread and water symbolize the most basic needs of human life.” (P. 601)

⁶⁸Slotki comments that in **verses 17-24** “The righteous are now addressed collectively as an individual.” (P. 157)

Oswalt entitles **verses 17-24** “The King in his beauty.” Motyer has “The presence of the king.”

Oswalt comments that “**Verses 17-24** detail the results which flow from an admission of helplessness and a turning to God. No longer will there be dependence upon a false and craven leadership. Then the true king will be revealed and honored as such. In that relation there will be the security which was sought in so many other ways...

“The picture seems to mingle the historical and the eschatological as well as the physical and the spiritual. On the one hand, the deliverance from Sennacherib seems to be in view (**verses 18-19**), yet the picture in **verses 20-22** is not merely of a historical deliverance. By the same token, ‘king’ in **verse 17** could refer to Hezekiah, yet the

(continued...)

תְּרַאֲיִנָּה אֶרֶץ מִרְתַּקִּים:

⁶⁸(...continued)

overall setting makes it plain we are talking of no merely human king. Furthermore, as **verse 24b** makes explicit, the true benefits of God's kingdom are spiritual." (P. 602)

Kaiser entitles **verses 17-19** "The ruler of the age of salvation."

He comments that here we are faced with the "difficult decision of whether the vision of the king foretold at the beginning of the description of salvation which opens with [**verse 17**] is a Divine manifestation or a vision of the Messiah [why can it not be both?].

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 17**: "*A king in his beauty shall thine eyes behold...Of those who take the futures in their proper meaning, some suppose Jehovah to be meant...others the Messiah (Abarbenel), but most writers, Hezekiah...To see the king in his beauty does not mean in his moral excellence...but in his royal state, with tacit reference to his previous state of mourning and dejection (Isaiah 37:1). They (i.e. thine eyes) shall behold a land of distances or distant places...*

"The verse before us, taken by itself, might be understood as a threatening that the Jews should see the king of Babylon in his royal state, and in a distant land... Instead of being cooped up within the walls of Jerusalem by the Assyrians, the inhabitants should not only freely traverse their own land, but visit distant nations." (Pp. 13-14)

Oswalt states that "*A King in his beauty* does not refer to any particular human monarch...**Verse 22** states that the Lord is King. To equate someone such as Hezekiah, who is merely human, with God flies in the face of Isaiah's whole stance. He has shown again and again the folly of putting fallible mortal leaders in the place of God. For him now to reverse that stance is not likely...Furthermore, the absence of a definite article on 'king' suggest that an ideal is being spoken of, as in **Psalms 45** where the Messiah is in view [but while **Psalms 45** addresses the king as 'God,' it makes it very clear that an earthly king with his beautiful wife and harem is being addressed!]. This view is reinforced by the description of the royal realm as a *land of distances*. This is hardly Hezekiah's constricted domain...Rather, the prophet is using the coming deliverance from Sennacherib to speak of that day when true and final deliverance will have come." (Pp. 602-03)

Do you agree with Oswalt? We do not, and think the Messianic interpretation of this passage is far-fetched, just as it is with **Psalms 45**. Motyer agrees with Oswalt, stating that "The cognate verb of beauty is used of the ideal king of **Psalms 45:2-3** ('excellent'), and the use of the word here indicates that the Messiah is intended." (P. 267) What a round-about way to point to the Messiah! As if Isaiah did not know the word "Messiah." But he does, and the only "Messiah" he mentions is the Persian Cyrus, in **Isaiah 45:1**.

A king in his beauty,⁶⁹ your eyes will see;
they will see (synonym) a land of distant places.⁷⁰

33:18⁷¹ לְבַרְךָ יְהִי מַלְכוּת אֵימָה

⁶⁹Slotki's translation has the definite article, "the king in his beauty," although there is no definite article in the Hebrew text.

Slotki comments that the phrase is referring to "Hezekiah in his royal robes, in contrast to his torn garments and sackcloth (compare **Isaiah 37:1**). Others see in the verse an allusion to the Messiah or an eschatological reference to the Divine Presence which will be enjoyed by the righteous in the hereafter." (P. 157)

⁷⁰Motyer comments that "Here and in the parallel **verses 21-23** the presence of the king is linked with a land enjoyed without fear (literally 'a land of far distances'), broad in extent, with freedom of movement within it and not a threat as far as the eye can see!" (P. 267)

Notice how much of this comment is being read into the text—a land "enjoyed without fear," and "with freedom of movement within it," and "not a threat as far as the eye can see."

⁷¹Slotki comments on **verses 18-19**: "In the coming times of peace, the days of oppression will be recalled but only as a memory." (P. 157)

Oswalt comments on these verses that "In that coming day, God's people will look back meditatively on the terror they had known...The scribes and weighers who would have weighed and recorded the tribute will be gone along with those who toted tribute (The idea of counting towers is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, so other alternatives have been proposed: 'treasure chests'...'captives'...'tax-gatherers'...But there is nothing intrinsically implausible about the idea of counting towers, either as part of the treaty or as a part of reconnoitering for the coming siege.) No more is their strange-sounding, unintelligible speech to be heard as they chatter to one another, delighting in the humiliation of those forced to pay tribute." (P. 603)

Motyer comments on **verses 18-19** that "Gone alike are the experience of fear (**verse 18a**), the victorious enemy (**verse 18b-d**) and even the sound of alien speech (**verse 19**)..."

"The descriptions of the enemy officials ('...who noted things down...weighed things out...noted down the towers...') are vague, but **2 Kings 24** suggests that maybe one official listed those who were destined for captivity, another weighed and recorded the spoil, and a third made an inventory of buildings for demolition. However, all is now in the past; the arrogant and their unintelligible talk are all gone." (P. 267)

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 18**: "*Thy heart shall meditate terror.* This does not mean, it shall conceive or experience present terror, but reflect on that

(continued...)

אֵיִה סִפֵּר

אֵיִה שָׁקַל

אֵיִה סִפֵּר אֶת־הַמִּגְדָּלִים:

Your (singular) heart will muse on / consider carefully (the) terror.⁷²

Where (is) one counting?

Where (is) one weighing?⁷³

Where is one counting the towers?⁷⁴

33:19⁷⁵ אֶת־עַם נֹעֵז לֹא תִרְאֶה

⁷¹(...continued)

which is already past. What follows is explained by some as the language of the Jews in their terror calling for the officers on whom they depended for protection. But the officers named are not those to whom they would probably have looked in this emergency. Other more naturally understand it therefore as the triumphant exclamation of the people when they found themselves so suddenly delivered from their enemies. *Where is he that counted? Where is he that weighed? Where is he that counted the towers?*" (P. 14)

⁷²Slotki comments that "the terror" is referring to the terror "of the past time." (P. 157)

⁷³Slotki comments that the question of where is the one counting / that "counted" is referring to "the Assyrian official who oppressed the people," and who counted "the number of persons to be subjected to forced labor or monetary payment" and that the "weighed" is referring to the officials weighing "the tribute for the Assyrian king." (P. 157)

⁷⁴Slotki states that "counting the towers" refers to the Assyrian official ascertaining "which were to be pulled down, or to estimate the strength of resistance of which a city was capable." (P. 157)

Alexander states that "The towers are of course the fortifications of Jerusalem. By *counting* them, some understand surveying them, either with a view to garrisoning or dismantling; other, the act of reconnoitering them from without, which some ascribe particularly to Rabshakeh or Sennacherib himself...

"The general meaning of the verse is plain, as an expression of surprise and joy that the oppressor or besieger had now vanished." (Pp. 14-15)

⁷⁵Alexander translates / comments on **verse 19**: "*The fierce (or determined) people thou shalt not see. Thou shalt see no more the Assyrians, whose*

(continued...)

עַם עֲמִיק שִׁפְהָ מְשֻׁמוֹעַ

נִלְעַג לְשׁוֹן אֵין בִּינָה:

A barbarous / fierce people you (singular) will not see;
a people of lip / speech (too) deep to understand,
stammering of tongue,
there is no understanding.⁷⁶⁷⁷

33:20⁷⁸ חֲזָה צִיּוֹן קְרִית מוֹעֲדֵנִי

⁷⁵(...continued)

disappearance was implied in the questions of the foregoing verse...*A people deep of lip from hearing*, i.e. too obscure for thee to understand...The later writers...understand deep as denoting obscure or unintelligible. The preposition before hearing, though not directly negative, is virtually so, as it denotes *away from*, which is really equivalent to so *as not to hear*, or *be heard*...*Barbarous tongue* (or of a barbarous tongue), *without meaning* (literally, *there is no meaning*)...

“The whole is a mere paraphrastic description of a people strange and foreign.”
(P. 15)

⁷⁶Slotki holds that **verse 19** “describes a warlike, foreign invader,” that is “without understanding,” i.e. that speaks a language “incomprehensible to the inhabitants of Judea.” (Pp. 157-58)

⁷⁷Slotki comments on **verses 20-24** that they depict “the moral and material bliss of Jerusalem.” (P. 158)

He comments on **verse 20** that it gives “a picture of permanent stability, the city being represented as a tent which is securely fixed to the ground.” (P. 158)

⁷⁸Oswalt comments on **verses 20-22** that “Instead of seeing the Assyrian overlords, the Judeans will see Jerusalem secure and protected, because of her relation to her true king.” (P. 603)

Kaiser entitles **verses 20-22** “Salvation in the age of salvation.”

He comments that The poet turns from the still terrifying conception of the foreign nation to a brighter picture, that of the new Jerusalem which will never again be in danger, the place of pilgrimage for those who together with its inhabitants celebrate the festivals (compare **4:5**)...

“Just as the shepherd who has found a protected and well-watered pasture of adequate size no longer has to wander and search, so in the future all the people in

(continued...)

עֵינֶיךָ תִּרְאֶינָה יְרוּשָׁלַם

נֹהָ שְׂאֲנָן

אֶהֱל בַּלְיָצֵן

בַּלְיָסַע יִתְדֹתָיו לְנִצַח

וְכָל־חֲבָלָיו בַּלְיָנִתְקוֹ:

See Zion, city of our appointed pilgrim-festivals!⁷⁹

⁷⁸(...continued)

Jerusalem will find a permanent residence and means of subsistence in a liberated and marvelously transformed country. This city, which was not without water supplies but was certainly not abundantly watered, will then be famous for its new spring which feeds abundant water into whole rivers, a conception which is developed in greater detail in **Ezekiel 47**...

“The idea that the rivers which originate here could become a new source of danger is explicitly rejected: they are unnavigable. This very idea shows that we are in a time of highly developed maritime trade, which had received fresh encouragement from the founding of Alexandria and Seleucia Pieria, in addition to the ancient Phoenician ports.” (Pp. 348-49)

Alexander translates / comments on **verse 20**: “*But there shall Jehovah be mighty for us (or in our behalf)...*The connection of the verses is, that Zion shall never be weakened or removed, but on the contrary Jehovah, etc...The sense seems to be that He will there display His power for our protection and advantage. *A place of rivers, streams, broad (on) both hands (or sides)*, i.e. completely surrounding her...

“The situation described is one which has all the advantages of mighty streams without their dangers. *There shall not go in it an oared vessel (literally, a ship of oar), and a gallant ship shall not pass through it.* The parallel expressions both refer, no doubt, to ships of war, which, in ancient times, were propelled by oars.” (Pp. 16-17)

Motyer comments on **verse 20**, that “This is the heart of the poem...Zion is first, a city of religious pilgrimage and fellowship with the Lord (our festivals / ‘appointed feasts / assemblies’)...and secondly, one of peace and security of tenure...The fact that it will *not be moved* and *never be pulled up* signifies that pilgrimage is over. The tent ‘will not have to pack up; its pegs will not ever move on.’” (P. 267)

⁷⁹Oswalt’s translation is “city of our appointments,” and he states that this “refers to Jerusalem as the appointed meeting place with God. Ultimately this is the city’s significance. That it is David’s royal city is not important. That it is a temple city is not

(continued...)

Your eye will see (synonym) Jerusalem,
a secure dwelling,
a tent—it will not travel;
its tent-pegs will not be pulled up to the perpetuity,
and all its cords will not be torn away.⁸⁰

⁷⁹(...continued)

the issue. What matters is that here God can meet human beings face to face. When that function was blurred or lost, Jerusalem would become simply one more city.” (P. 603)

And we ask, Where can God not meet human beings face to face? Can it not happen in the desert at a burning bush? Can it not happen at Mount Sinai? Can it not happen on a city garbage heap (Job)? What do you think Jesus meant, as the **Gospel of John** reports him as saying to the woman of Samaria that “neither on this mountain (Gerizim at Shechem) nor in Jerusalem (Israel’s ‘temple-mount’) but in Spirit and in truth”? We say that means anywhere a human heart is open to God’s Self-revelation!

What do you say?

⁸⁰Oswalt comments that “a tent not moved” (his translation) “seems at first a very odd figure for permanence. Perhaps there two factors in the prophet’s choice of images. One might have been the idea of the tabernacle in the wilderness. The tabernacle was the place where God was, the place where He could be met. During the wandering of the Hebrew people the tabernacle—and in one sense, God—was continually moving with the people. Now God would no longer move. He would come in the last days to a permanent rest.” (Pp. 603-04)

This is strange theology! Are we to believe that YHWH was located in the tabernacle, moving to the different stopping points in Israel’s travels, but not present elsewhere in the ancient world—say in Egypt, or in Israel, or in Ethiopia? We say YHWH was indeed with the wanderers in the wilderness, but at the same time He was present with the female mountain goats giving birth on unknown mountain-tops, and with the hippopotami and crocodiles inhabiting earth’s swamps, whether in the Nile or in the Amazon—as well as with the heavenly bodies (we say, throughout the ‘multi-verse’), as YHWH’s speeches in **Job 38-41** so eloquently affirm. YHWH is the God of the ostrich and the tiger just as well as the God of Israel! And if we say that now at last He will settle down permanently, does that mean He will no longer be universally “present”? We say it is a total misunderstanding of YHWH God to think of His being present only in one location! YHWH of course can choose a certain place to reveal Himself—but that by no means implies that He is not universally present, or being revealed in other places!

33:21⁸¹ כִּי אִם־שָׁם אֲדִיר יְהוָה לָנוּ

מִקּוֹם־נְהָרִים

יֵאָרִים רַחְבֵי יָדַיִם

בְּלִתְלַךְ בּוֹ אֲנִי־שֵׁיט

וְצִי אֲדִיר לֹא יַעְבְּרֵנוּ:

But there, majestic YHWH (will be) for us a place of rivers,
broad Nile-canals;⁸²
a rowing-fleet will not go on it,
and a majestic ship will not pass over it.⁸³

⁸¹Slotki comments on **verse 21** that “Though fertile and prosperous, the city will be in no fear of attack from a hostile fleet. Jerusalem is compared with a city surrounded by water as a protection.” (P. 158) Compare **Nahum 3:8**,

Did you do better than No-Amon,
the one dwelling by the rivers,
waters all around it?
Whose fortress (is the) sea,
from a sea, her wall?

⁸²We take Isaiah’s description of Jerusalem here to be extremely metaphorical, and not to be taken literally. It is an attempt, we say, by Isaiah to depict Jerusalem like the cities of Babylon and Nineveh, with their rivers running through them.

Oswalt comments that “Where God is, there is security. Jerusalem had no great rivers to contribute to its defense such as Babylon or Nineveh had. Better to have God. With Him one has all the benefits of a great river with none of its liabilities.” (P. 604)

He adds in a footnote, “Those who attempt to make too tight a connection between the images here must run into difficulties (Yes!). Is God a place? Do ships run on God?” (*Ibid.*)

⁸³Translations of **verse 21** vary considerably, especially the Greek:

King James, “But there the glorious LORD *will be* unto us a place of broad rivers *and* streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.”

(continued...)

33:22⁸⁴ כִּי יְהוָה שֹׁפֵטֵנוּ

יְהוָה מִחֲקֵקֵנוּ

יְהוָה מִלְּפָנֵינוּ

הוּא יוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ:

Because YHWH (is) our Judge;⁸⁵

⁸³(...continued)

Tanakh, “For there the LORD in His greatness shall be for us Like a region of rivers, of broad streams, Where no floating vessels can sail And no mighty craft can travel.”

New Revised Standard, “But there the LORD in majesty will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams, where no galley with oars can go, nor stately ship can pass.”

New International, “There the LORD will be our Mighty One. It will be like a place of broad rivers and streams. No galley with oars will ride them, no mighty ship will sail them.”

New Jerusalem, “There it is that Yahweh shows us his power, like a place of rivers and very wide canals on which will row no galley, over which will pass no majestic ship.”

Rahfs, ὅτι τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου μέγα ὑμῖν τόπος ὑμῖν ἔσται ποταμοὶ καὶ διώρυγες πλατεῖς καὶ εὐρύχωροι οὐ πορεύσῃ ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν οὐδὲ πορεύσεται πλοῖον ἐλαῦνον, “Because the name of (the) Lord (is) great to you (plural), there will be a place for you, of rivers and canals, wide and spacious! You shall not go this way, neither shall a sailing ship go (this way).

⁸⁴Slotki states that **verse 22** gives “the reason for the prophet’s confidence.” (P. 158)

Alexander translates **verse 22**: “For Jehovah our Judge, Jehovah our Lawgiver, Jehovah our King, He will save us.”

⁸⁵That YHWH is our Judge is not to be taken in a negative sense, as One Who condemns us for our failures or misdeeds. “Judge” is to be taken in the sense of the **Book of Judges**, in which the judges were military deliverers of their people from oppressors. YHWH as our Judge means He is our Leader, our Defender. We can trust YHWH to take care of His people!

Can you honestly affirm that YHWH is your Judge in this sense?

YHWH (is) our statute-giver;⁸⁶

⁸⁶The Hebrew word here is מְשַׁבֵּרֵי חֻמּוֹת, **mechoqqenu**, a poel participle meaning “prescriber of laws,” or “statute-giver.” YHWH will guide us aright; He will teach us the way we should go. We can trust YHWH to lead us in the right direction!

Think about the Ten Commandments; think about the way Jesus summed up the Law and the Prophets, according to **Matthew**:

7:12, Πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἐὰν θέλητε ἵνα ποιῶσιν ὑμῖν οἱ ἄνθρωποι,
οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιεῖτε αὐτοῖς·
οὗτος γάρ ἐστιν ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται.
All things therefore, whatever you may desire that the people should do to you,
in this way also you do to them!
For this is the law and the prophets!

22:37-40,

37 ὁ δὲ ἔφη αὐτῷ· ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου
ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ σου
καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου
καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου·
But then he said to him, You shall love (the) Lord your God,
with all your heart,
and with all your innermost-being,
and with all your mind!

38 αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μεγάλη καὶ πρώτη ἐντολή.
This is the great and first commandment.

39 δευτέρα δὲ ὁμοία αὐτῇ·
ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.
But then a second, similar one (is) this:
you shall love your neighbor as yourself!

40 ἐν ταύταις ταῖς δυσὶν ἐντολαῖς
ὅλος ὁ νόμος κρέμαται καὶ οἱ προφῆται.
On these two commandments
the whole law and the prophets hang / depend.

With such guidance, the honest lovers of YHWH cannot go wrong! Their lives will be filled with love for God (worshiping, praying, obeying, serving) and love for neighbor (especially the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the homeless immigrant). What could be better than that?

YHWH is our King.⁸⁷

He will save / deliver us.

33:23⁸⁸ נִטְשׁוּ חֲבֻלֵיךָ

⁸⁷This YHWH, Who spoke and the multiverse exploded, moving out at the speed of light, forming billions and untold billions of star-worlds, the Creator is our King! We serve Him Who called this world into being, Who gave life and breath to all of us—our King Whom we gladly serve!

What greater service could there be? This is YHWH, the God Jesus revealed to us, and in Whose service he gave his life, as the embodiment of YHWH's love for us!

⁸⁸Kaiser entitles **verses 23-24** “The spoil and the salvation of the age of salvation.”

He comments that “From time to time a ship would sail up the river into the territory of Judah. Then it would become as it were enchanted, and would lose its ability to sail, so that it could be plundered with all its treasures. The blind and the lame (compare **2 Samuel 5:8**) would need to do no more than reach out...

There will no longer be anyone lame or blind in the literal sense, a hope with which anyone who has passed through the streets of an Eastern city, with its blind and crippled persons, will sympathize. For now all the inhabitants of Zion will be healthy (compare **Isaiah 35:5-6**), a consequence of the forgiveness of their wickedness...

“This completes the picture of a city which is waiting for its wanderers to return home...[a home] in which righteousness rules, in which there is no one sick or frail, whose springs feed mighty rivers, around which the land spreads away into the distance, and over which, with its people, Yahweh Himself rules as King (compare **Psalms 24; 47; 76; 96**; and also **Revelation 21:9-22:5**...

“Anyone who desires more righteousness, less sickness and more fruitfulness upon this earth must himself be more righteous, bind up wounds, heal sickness and cultivate waste places. Whether this will be successful, and whether we shall thereby become really more human, no doubt still depends upon whether we regard the fear of God as the beginning of wisdom and measure our own conscience against the entry *torah*. That everything which we achieve remains ultimately fragmentary will ensure that in looking for the earthly Jerusalem we do not entirely forget the heavenly.” (Pp. 349-50)

Slotki states that **verse 23** “seems to connect with **verse 21** [**Tanakh** unites the two verses] and is apparently addressed to any enemy that might dare to take his vessels of war through the broad rivers and streams [our ‘canals’] mentioned.” (P. 158)

Alexander translates **verse 23**: “*Thy ropes are cast loose; they do not hold upright their mast; they do not spread the sail; then is shared plunder of booty in plenty;*

(continued...)

בַּל־יִחַזְקוּ כֵּן־תִּרְנָם
 בַּל־פָּרְשׁוּ יָנֹס
 אִז חֶלֶק עַרְשָׁלַּי מִרְבֵּה
 פִּסְתִּים בְּזִזוּ בָּז:

Your cords were forsaken,⁸⁹
 they will not hold strong their mast;
 they did not spread out a standard;
 then⁹⁰ it was divided as far as much spoil.⁹¹

⁸⁸(...continued)
the lame spoil the spoil.

He comments that “There is, at the beginning of this verse, a sudden apostrophe [direct personal address] to the enemy considered as a ship. This figure could be naturally suggested by those of **verse 21**. It was there said that no vessel should approach the holy city. But now the prophet seems to remember that one had done so, the proud ship of Assyria. But what was its fate? He sees it dismantled and abandoned to its enemies.” (P. 17)

Oswalt says, “If the statement is original in this place [most modern commentators consider **verse 23a** to be intrusive], there are two alternative interpretations. The older one holds that it refers to Assyria: she is a ship in disarray about to be plundered by God’s people...The other alternative is to take Judah as the subject...Judah, having been pictured as victorious, is now pictured in disarray...’Make no mistake,’ [Isaiah] says, ‘our glorious future, our triumph over our enemies, is not because we are some mighty ship such as I mentioned just now (**verse 21**). We are a drifting hulk. Our hope is in a king who heals disease and forgives sin.” (P. 605)

⁸⁹Slotki’s translation has “Thy tacklings are loosed,” and he suggests “thy ropes hang slack.” (P. 158)

⁹⁰Slotki states that “then” refers to “when they dared to enter the rivers protecting Jerusalem.” (P. 159)

⁹¹Motyer comments on this strange language that “As a ‘ship of state’ Zion is crippled—rigging loose, mast unstepped [‘not moved from a step’], sails (or ‘flag’) unhoisted—yet this limping hulk takes the spoil!” (P. 268)

But no—the text says it is the lame who take the spoil—not the limping hulk of a ship—or is a limping hulk of a ship being described as “lame”?

Lame people plundered plunder.

33:24⁹² וּבִלְיַאֲמַר שָׁכֵן חֲלִיתִי

הָעַם הַיֹּשֵׁב בָּהּ נִשְׂא עוֹן:

And an inhabitant will not say I was sick--

the people that dwells in it was forgiven iniquity / guilt.⁹³

⁹²Alexander translates / comments on **verse 24**: “And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick (or have been sick). This may either mean that none shall be sick, or that those who have been so shall be recovered...The people dwelling in it (is) forgiven (its) iniquity...”

“The words may be taken in a wider sense...that suffering shall cease with sin which is its cause. Thus understood, the words are strictly applicable only to a state of things still future, either upon earth or in heaven.” (Pp. 17-18)

⁹³Slotki comments that **verse 24** “resumes the description of the happy state of Jerusalem. The inhabitants will be free from pain and disease since all their sins will be forgiven. Sickness of the body was believed to be the consequence of the demoralization of the soul.” (P. 159) Compare **Psalm 103:3**,

The One Who forgives all your guilts / iniquities,
the One Who heals all your diseases!

Oswalt states that “The closing emphasis upon the forgiveness of iniquity is reminiscent of **4:3-4** and is of considerable importance. It makes the point that Judah’s need is deeper than the need for deliverance from oppression. Ultimately, says Isaiah, our problem is a broken relationship with God because of sin. That being so, mere defeat of enemies and restoration to the land will not do. The final goal is a forgiven people living a life in keeping with God’s character.” (Pp. 605-06)

Motyer comments on **verse 24** that “Matching the voice of the law in **verses 14-16**, here is the comfort of the gospel. In Zion there will be neither sickness nor sin.” (P. 268)